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United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton
Middle District of Florida

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Jacksonville Ocala Fort Myers
CONTACT: STEVE COLE
PHONE: (813) 274-6136
FAX: (813) 274-6300

PINELLAS COUNTY OXYCODONE TRAFFICKERS USING FRAUDULENT PRESCRIPTION SCHEME SENTENCED

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that U.S. District Judge Steven D. Merryday yesterday sentenced five defendants to federal prison who had pleaded guilty to possess with intent to distribute and to distributing oxycodone as part of a Pinellas County fraudulent prescription scheme: Juan Ramos, age 21, was sentenced to 84 months; Jonathan Hamblin, age 21, was sentenced to 46 months; James Dooley, age 41, was sentenced to 77 months; Alexis Beltran, age 25, was sentenced to 70 months; and Luis Quiles, age 41, was sentenced to 77 months. Judge Merryday continued the sentencing of another co-defendant, William Mitchell IV, age 52, for thirty (30) days. Previously, three additional defendants were sentenced in separate cases involving the same fraudulent prescription scheme: January 25, 2010, Judge James D. Whittemore sentenced Moises Rosario, age 28, to 110 months in federal prison, on December 7, 2009, Judge Whittmore sentenced Pedro Baez, age 34, to 92 months, and March 16, 2010, Judge Virginia M. Hernandez Covington sentenced Lawrence McCarthy, age 40, to 84 months in federal prison. All of the defendants sentenced thus far are from Pinellas County.

According to court documents filed in connection with the defendants' guilty pleas,

Mary Powers and Robert Whitney (who were previously sentenced to federal prison by Judge Whittemore in October 2009), authored and generated hundreds of fraudulent prescriptions on their home computers that the defendants then filled. Powers and Whitney used the DEA numbers and addresses of local area physicians on the prescriptions, but they listed a telephone number for a cell phone that Powers and Whitney used to pose as doctor's office personnel whenever a pharmacy called to verify a prescription. Each prescription was written for 240 30 mg Oxycodone tablets, and the defendants returned a portion of the pills they obtained with the prescriptions to Powers and Whitney. The defendants filled the fraudulent prescriptions at Trinity Pharmacy, Baycare Pharmacy, or Seminole Drugs in Pinellas County.

The defendants are part of large group of approximately fifty (50) co-conspirators who were prosecuted jointly by federal and state authorities.

Their cases were investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, and the Clearwater Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Kelley Howard-Allen prosecuted the federal cases.